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Rev. Daniel Chaplin
Groton (ms)

DISCOURSE,

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DELIVERED AT MILFORD,

AUGUST 20th, 1812,

THE DAY

RECOMMENDED BY THE PRESIDENT,

FOR

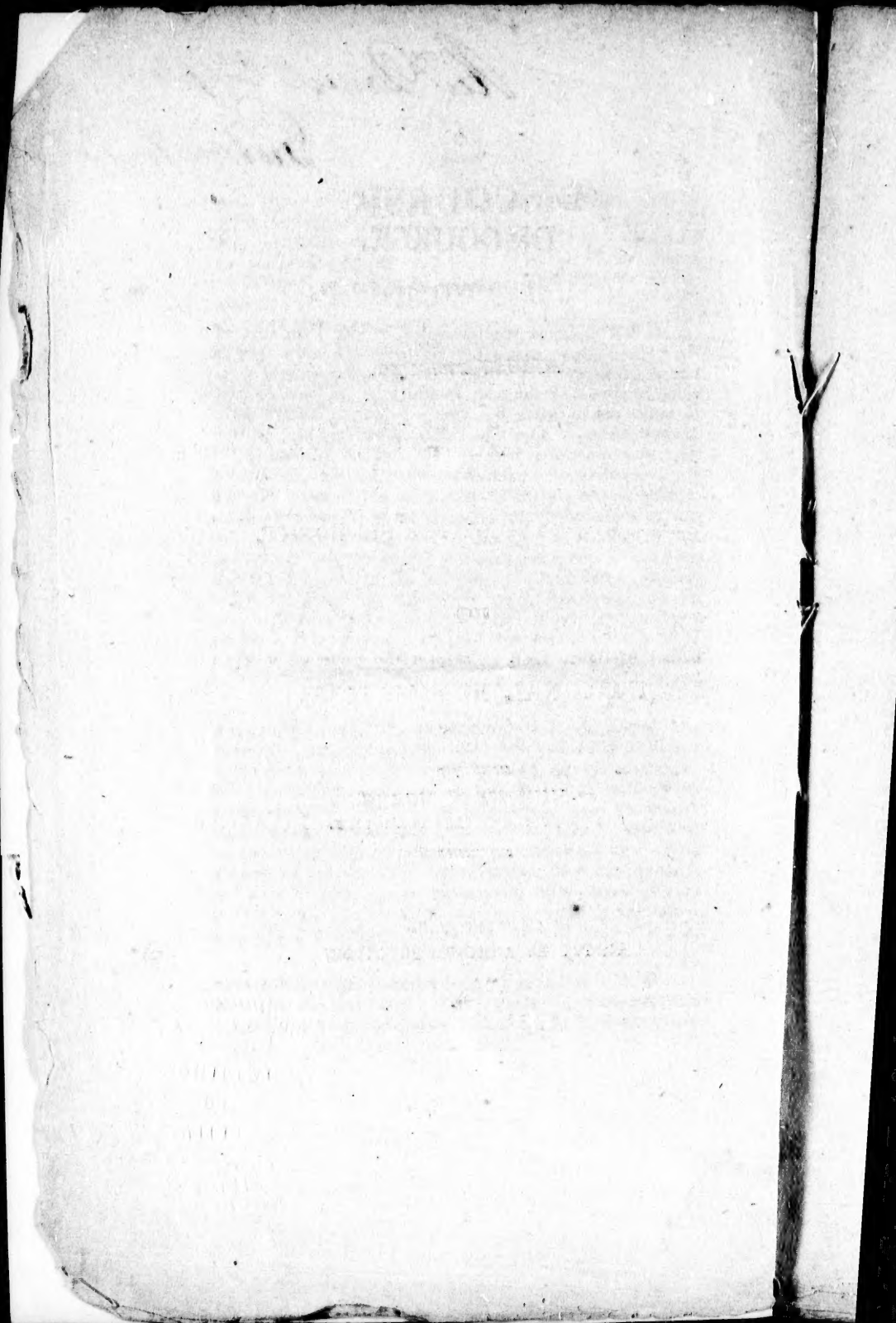
NATIONAL HUMILIATION.

BY HUMPHREY MOORE,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN MILFORD.

AMHERST, N. H.
PRINTED BY RICHARD BOYLSTON.

....
1812.

BIBLIOTHEQUE
PHILEAS OAKMAN
QUEBEC, CANADA.



DISCOURSE.

THIS day is recommended by the President of the United States, as a *convenient* time for this nation to humiliate themselves before God, "on the solemn occasion, produced by the war, in which he has been pleased to suffer the injustice of a foreign power to involve these United States." Our Chief Magistrate has not, on this day, recommended fasting. He has not recommended the assembling of ourselves together for the purpose of *uniting* in our supplications to Almighty God. He has not recommended abstinence from labor and recreation. But from what he *has* said, we are highly gratified that we are *enabled* to observe this, as a day of humiliation, fasting and social worship. It was not till *after* the judgment of war was declared and sent upon our land, we were requested to humble ourselves; to seek divine direction. It was not recommended to us to present our petitions before Almighty God to *prevent* the calamity of war; but *now* we are requested to beseech him to "bestow his blessing on our arms."

When any of the judgments of Heaven falls upon a nation, it is a sure token of divine displeasure. National calamities denote national sins. Nineveh, when their destruction *impended*, fasted, humbled themselves, and sought the pardoning mercy of Heaven. God saw their penitence; heard their prayers; and turned from his fierce anger. If we had been directed to humble ourselves as a nation, and had humbled ourselves while the judgments only appeared with *threatening* aspect, who knows but God would so have disposed the hearts of our enemies, and overruled the councils of our government, that the present calamity would have been averted?

War is undoubtedly the heaviest judgment that ever was sent upon a nation. It is a great calamity that the productions of the ground, reared by our hands for our

subsistence, should be ravaged by an enemy, or be appropriated to the support of our own soldiery. It is a great calamity to see our nearest connexions called to the field of action to meet the weapons of death. It is a great calamity to be called ~~ourselves~~ to meet our enemy ; to slay our fellow creatures, or to fall victims by their hands. When three judgments, famine, pestilence, and the sword, were offered to the choice of David, he desired that he might not fall into the hands of men. Although he was a man of war and of great success in battle ; yet he was unwilling to encounter the enemy, when the anger of God was kindled against him. Any other judgment he chose in preference to this.

The solemnities of this day invite our attention to the natural causes of the war, which has begun to afflict us ; to its expediency, and to its probable effects.

In a government like ours, rulers derive their power from the people ; and they are accountable to them for the use of the authority, with which they are vested. People have a right to examine the official conduct of their rulers ; and to judge whether they have been faithful to the trust, reposed in their hands. They have a right, by fair and constitutional means, to continue, or discontinue them in office, according as their administration appears, in their judgment, to promote, or injure their general interest. They have a right to the freedom of the press for the circulation of political truth ; and they have a right to the freedom of speech for the same purpose. Of this latter right, the right of freedom of speech in the cause of political truth, we avail ourselves this day. If any regret the privilege, they regret one of the most essential privileges of a republican government. They fail in one point. It is in political as in the moral law, he, that faileth in one point, is guilty of all.

It could be wished that a brief view of the history of our nation, since the adoption of the federal constitution, might be exhibited. When these United States were formed into one confederate republic, they had many difficulties to encounter. Having just emerged from the oppression of a monarchical government, their minds were scarcely prepared for rational liberty. In view of

the evils, which attended a new and infant government, there were some, like the Israelites in the wilderness, who would have turned, and subjected themselves to their old task-masters. At this period, the nation was burdened with an immense debt. It required great efforts of wisdom to invent sources, and systematize methods of revenue, by which the interest might annually be paid; the debt be diminished; and the expenses of government be defrayed. Sources of wisdom appeared in the administration; and they found sources of revenue in almost every part of the world. They moved the wheels of the new government with a skill, which indicated not only wisdom, but the experience of years.

At this period an Indian war ravaged our frontier. The savages made considerable depredations; and excited no small alarm through the nation. Instead of carrying war among them, and provoking their everlasting revenge, treaties of peace were formed with them; their claims were adjusted, and their friendship restored. About this time, the late King of France was driven from his throne and from the world. The little horns, which successively rose from the ruins of his empire, pushed, by various methods, to implicate this nation in their difficulties and commotions. Their wives were discovered and disconcerted; their aggressions upon our commerce were bravely resisted and adjustments were made. Commercial treaties were formed with many of the European powers, which, while they preserved peace, excited and promoted our commercial interest. Arrangements were made for restoring to their country many of our seamen, who were retained in the most cruel bondage. Insurrections, which were excited in our country by foreigners and by the enemies of our constitution, were happily quelled and tranquillity restored.

In this golden age of our country, our commerce extended to almost every part of the world. From every climate we received the delights of life. In almost every sea we found sources of wealth. Agriculture received a stimulus, which animated the hearts of our citizens; which gave life and energy to industry. Arts, sciences and manufactures flourished. Institutions, of the most useful nature, were established and prospered. Our

government, at the early age of twelve years, had acquired the maturity, the wisdom, and firmness of manhood. A few individual errors* had not grown into habit; nor affected its general character. They only proved that "to err is human."

At this prosperous era of our country, it might have been expected she would have been contented and happy. But in the political, as in the physical world, what is rapid in its growth, and sudden in its maturity, is rapid in its decline, and soon becomes extinct. The restless mind of man is ever prone to change; and it delights in producing change. Human nature, even in paradise, was not satisfied. It sought a change; and it experienced a fatal change.

At the commencement of the second twelve years of our government, a material alteration took place in its administration. The former rulers, like fruit untimely ripe, were shaken off by the storm of opposition. Here commences a new era in our political history. New men, elevated to the first offices in the nation, adopted new measures; and pursued almost a new system. They began, by removing from honorable and profitable offices men, whose political characters differed from their own. Without attempting to conciliate parties by blending both in the government, they monopolized the whole, or almost the whole of the authority, which lay within the scope of their power. The repeal of the judiciary law is considered an invasion upon the independence of that department, which in a republican government is considered a grand support of civil freedom. The repeal of taxes on the luxuries, and retaining or imposing them on the necessities of life, favored the wealthy, while it burdened the poor; favored the rich of the southern, while it threw expense upon the peasantry of the northern states. This alteration in the source of revenue appeared to savor more of monarchical, than of republican principles. The adopted country beyond the Mississippi, it is confidently believed, has not nearly paid the interest of the sum,

* *Armies, stamp act, taxes, &c.*

expended in its purchase. Besides, it renders the country unwieldy for a republican government ; and it renders our public debt also unwieldy. The sale of our public vessels destroyed the little bulwark, which had been raised for the defence of our maritime rights ; and invited the aggression of foreign powers upon our unprotected commerce. A system of economy was projected, and put in operation. It was formed upon narrow, shortsighted principles ; and executed upon a broad scale. While it abolished offices and dried up sources of revenue, it never diminished the salaries of the administration. It fed upon the treasury, which had been fattened by twelve years of plenty ; and in *less* than twelve other years, it had eaten it all up ; and like the lean kine, which Pharaoh saw in vision upon the brink of the river, it was lean, and hungry, and illflavored still. These measures remotely affected our national interest, and our republican principles. But it was reserved to a later period, that the measures of the administration should affect the vital fluids of the nation.

The time had come, when the Emperor of France had projected, and begun to carry into effect his continental system ; a system, which was designed to injure the commercial interest of Great-Britain. He had gained the assistance of the powers of Europe to aid his designs. He was not indifferent to America. He used means to draw her into his views ; and to persuade her to cooperate with him in accomplishing his ambitious projects.

At this time France and England were in the highest degree of collision ; and they were saturated with a spirit of retaliation. They both strove for the mastery in the art of revenge. So extensive were the British Orders and the French Decrees in their application, that they affected the commercial interest of neutral nations. They essentially affected the commercial interest of America. Neither admitted this to be their object ; nor did they attempt, by the laws of nations, to vindicate their infringement upon neutral rights ; but maintained, that it must be submitted to as a necessary result, arising from their restrictive and retaliating systems. France maintained that she would not relax her decrees, unless we would

enter into her views in opposition to England. Great Britain maintained that she would not rescind her orders, unless France repealed her decrees. Both, jealous for their honor, were slow to be first in relaxation of their systems. We, like a stripling by the side of these two contending champions, received part of the blows of each. Our remonstrances, our negotiations for years, proved fruitless.

Instead of vindicating our maritime rights by a manly resistance, as we did some years since with success, our government remanded our vessels from the ocean; and closed them in port. Because we could not enjoy unmolested *all* the commercial privileges of neutrality, our government prevented us from the enjoyment of *any*. We assert it upon high authority, that "the field of commercial enterprize, after allowing to the decrees and orders their full and practical effect, is still rich and extensive." Because we are denied the use of one right of ten, shall we not improve the nine? Because our fields suffer some damage from the elements, and we do not gather so much as we might otherwise do, shall we not plant and sow? Because we could not go to *every* foreign port with safety, should we not, therefore, go to *any*? This was a system of retaliation, which might have provoked the enemy, even to laughter. After a long trial of this experiment upon our enemies, and upon ourselves, it was relinquished, not having produced the desired effect. In lieu of this, the non-intercourse act was established; an act, if not more efficacious abroad, was less vexatious at home. All these political experiments proved ineffectual.

The impressment of our seamen by the British, is a just cause of complaint; and one cause of the present declared war. When our citizens are taken from their honest employment, and compelled into British service, American indignation rises in our breasts. We sympathize with the unfortunate sufferers. We would use every effectual measure for their restoration. But this subject, at first view apparently so plain, is not free from difficulty. Great-Britain asserts her right to take her own seamen upon the ocean wherever she can find them; and that our flag shall not secure them from her service. She pretends

no claim to *our* seamen ; and none are taken by the spirit of her authority. But upon the ocean, the great highway of nations, there are pillagers of men, as well as of property. The wilful outrage of an individual ought not to stigmatize his government, unless it countenances such aggression. There is such a similarity between American and English blood, language, manners, and customs that it is difficult to distinguish the difference. The British, in the eager search of her own seamen, have sometimes taken our own native marines, who, for want of credentials of their American citizenship, have been retained in the British service. But when has there been one retained, after he had, before suitable authority, given proof of his American citizenship ? Mistakes like these ; and lawless aggressions like these by lawless individuals, will take place ; and if this be a proper cause of offensive war, we shall be in everlasting war with some foreign power. The claim of Great Britain to her seamen in time of war is not peculiar to *her*. Other European powers claim the same right. Nor is this a new claim ; she has maintained it for ages. Should she relinquish this claim, the direct consequence would be the legal right of America to employ British seamen to the neglect of her own. How would this benefit the United States ? Would it be better to encourage foreigners than our own sons of the ocean ? Do we need foreign skill and bravery to navigate our vessels ; and defend the honor of our flag ? Will not the number of our seamen increase as fast as the number of our vessels ? Shall we not give employment and wages to our own citizens in preference to any other ? Should we compel Great-Britain to give up her right to her own seamen, in time of war, it would be more damage, than benefit to this nation. Why then should we make war to compel her to relinquish this claim ?

We are not insensible of the injuries we have received from Great-Britain ; nor do we wish to conceal them from public view. We wish not to check a patriotic glow of indignation for the wrongs we have suffered. Our *present* evils are not the only evils we have suffered from that maritime power ; but adjustments were *then* made, which preserved our national honor, and promoted our commer-

cial interest. Could not similar adjustments again have been made? A treaty, similar in principle to the one, which had expired, and under which our commerce prospered, was formed by our ministers, who were sent to England for that purpose; and transmitted to our government for ratification; a treaty, which the present Secretary of State declared, "might be accepted with honor and consistent with our interest." But alas, our cup of sufferings was not then full. This treaty was not even submitted to the consideration of the Senate; by the will of one man it was repressed.

In consequence of the aggressions of the British nation upon our unprotected commerce and in consequence of her adherence to the claim of her seamen in time of war, an OFFENSIVE WAR has been declared by our government against that power. Whether these are a sufficient cause for the commencement of hostilities the people will judge for themselves.

So great are the calamities of war that a nation ought not to be precipitated into it without the strongest reasons. Every mean of negotiation should be used before the fatal remedy of war be applied.

However different people may be in their opinion respecting the merits of the *cause* of the present war, they may, perhaps, be more unanimous respecting its *expediency*. The present war cannot be expedient, unless it presents a probability, a high probability that it will occasion a removal of the evils we suffer; and that it will not produce greater evils than those we already experience. Our government has pushed a war into one of the colonies of England. It is presumable that we have a sufficient military force in this country, but not in operation, to obtain it by conquest. Without saying any thing about the justice of shedding the blood of the Canadians (a considerable proportion of whom went from these States) for depredations, made upon us by the inhabitants of the Isle of Great-Britain, we ask, how will the conquest of Canada remove the evil of the impressment of our seamen? Will this conquest enable the English to make a more accurate distinction between the appearance of an American and a British seaman? Will this conquest dispose England to

withhold the power she has of impressing our seamen? Will our inroads upon her territorial property prevent her from making aggressions upon our commercial interests? or will they dispose her to friendship and peace; and divest her of maritime power? Will the conquest of Canada dispose her to relinquish her maritime principles, which she considers essential to her existence, to regain, by cession from the United States, the lumber and fur of this northern province?

Suppose the conquest of Canada will do *some* injury to Great-Britain, how will it benefit us? Will she make a profitable exchange to us by restoring our captured property for regaining this colony, which, at any time as well as the present, may be conquered; and must be purchased by her as often as conquered? In this view will she make any considerable remuneration to us for the regaining of this territory? Is it designed to incorporate it with these States; and make it a subject of our government? Our territory is already large, very large to be subject to a republican government. Will the heterogeneous mass of the population of Canada add strength to the bond of our national union? Will the addition of that population, a great part of which is the last scum of various nations, add weight to our national honor; or favor correct principles among our citizens? The great acquisitions of territory, which our nation is making, have a direct tendency to divide the interests of the different parts of the widely extended country; to make a permanent division of the population in political sentiment; and to hasten the dissolution of our republic.

The war, which our government has commenced upon the ocean, at this particular time, appears to be no less inexpedient. War was declared at a time, when hundreds of our vessels, thousands of our seamen, millions of our property were floating, unprotected on the seas. Our government's plea, that they had given notice of the danger, that they had laid an embargo upon our vessels, proves their pertinacity to their favorite system, at the risk of our property, and the lives of our seamen. It proves the inefficiency of all their commercial restrictions. Our government, who expressed so much indigna-

tion at impressment of our seamen, and the capture of our property, have, by a declaration of war at this juncture, exposed more property to be captured, and probably will be captured; have exposed more seamen to be taken prisoners, and undoubtedly will be taken prisoners, than would have been exposed or taken in many years by the British orders and French decrees, while we were pursuing our lawful commerce. Why was this violence committed by our own government against our property and our citizens? A richer harvest the English probably never reapt, than they are now reaping from our defenceless vessels. Is this the way to starve England to our terms; or to weaken her force that she will be compelled to capitulate? Our small naval force counteracts, in some measure, the depredations of the British. But the inequality in the returns of vessels taken and lost gives lamentable evidence of our inability to contend with that great power on her own element. What man would turn his flock among the wolves, for the sake of seeing his dogs just *worry* those savage animals? Our small navy cannot compel the mistress of the ocean to relinquish her maritime principles or practices.

The present war was declared at a time, when our country was not prepared to make invasions; and scarcely prepared to make any defence. At the time of this declaration, troops were to be raised, harbors to be fortified; and money, by some means, to be procured. It appears inexpedient, it appears hazardous for a nation in an unprepared state to proclaim war against an enemy, who is always prepared for hostilities.

The cause of the present war is alledged to be an infringement upon our commercial rights. If this were an *expedient* cause of war, would not our most commercial men approve the declaration, and enter into it with heart and hand? If *their* interest does not require it, should the interest of the more disinterested require it? If war be expedient, where is the war spirit, which once distinguished our country? Why do recruits progress with so reluctant step; and why are they almost filled up by those, who have little to gain and nothing to lose? Why are such exertions necessary to be used to procure the specified

detachments of militia ; and prepare them for their appointed destinations ? What reason can be assigned for this backwardness ? They do not *feel* the war to be necessary and expedient ; a war spirit has not fired their breasts. Let our country be invaded ; let hostilities commence on the land, which is consecrated to peace and freedom ; and we shall not need to wait to offer bounties ; to increase the wages of the soldier ; to rake the gloomy cells of the prison. War will glow in every heart. War will appear in every hand. War, war will resound from every mouth.

War appeared inexpedient at the time of its declaration, because the prospect at that time, or about that time, appeared more favorable for the adjustment of difficulties than it had appeared for a long time before. One very important difficulty, and, in its nature the most aggravating, had been settled. If satisfaction had been made for the dead, it might be hoped it would be made for the injured living. If satisfaction had been made for life, it might be hoped that satisfaction would be made for property. The administration had long maintained that the French decrees were repealed, on whose repeal the British government engaged to rescind their orders, as they respected us. While our administration maintained their position, the British Minister called for documents, which should prove that an official and effectual repeal had taken place. Upon this evidence he declared that the Orders in Council should be annulled. No such evidence was then exhibited ; negotiation ceased, and war was declared. Immediately after the declaration of war by our government, the requested evidence of the repeal of the decrees was exhibited ; and the English government, agreeably to their declaration, repealed their orders. There is some obscurity attending the dates and circumstances of these transactions. Conjecture is alive. Time will probably develop the mystery. It is regretted that these transactions did not take place at an earlier date. It is still hoped that they will lead to a termination of hostilities, and to a settlement of all our national difficulties.

In reviewing the restrictive measures of government on our commerce, there is appearance of a departure from foreign impartiality ; a departure from neutral principles.

Far be it from us to charge our administration with foreign partiality, or with foreign influence. But it is a fact, too plain to be disputed, that the restrictive, commercial system, which they have adopted for some years past, comported with the continental system of Europe; and was unequal in its effects toward the two rival powers of that quarter of the globe. If an equipoise could not be preserved; if preference *must* be given, policy, and partiality for our own country would give it where our highest interest lay. What wise government would not make the interest of their own nation their prime object?

By reviewing the restrictive laws, under which our commerce has languished, we cannot but observe, that they do not appear to have been adapted to the genius and habits of this nation. The location and geography of our country are peculiarly favorable to navigation. Prosperity on the seas in past years excited a commercial spirit, which could not easily be repressed. Commercial habits could not easily be exchanged for any other. Which of the late restrictive laws upon our trade has not been daily violated? Let our government restrain the rivers from emptying into the sea; let them lay effectual restrictions on the rise and fall of the tides, and then they may restrain our seamen from their own element; then they may check the spirit of commercial enterprize of our citizens. Our commerce has been protected, and protected till it has been almost destroyed; and the remainder is left to the mercy of the enemy. Business and trade will regulate themselves. The farmer does not want instructions from the administration when to sow and reap; and when and where to go to market. He best knows his own business and his own interest. Our commercial men best know *their* business and *their* interest. If they suffer injuries abroad, they wish not to be burdened at home. They have probably suffered more from the restrictions of their own government than from foreign orders and decrees.

A position for defence is always commendable, is always necessary. It is as necessary for a nation as for an individual. It is as necessary upon the ocean as upon the land. What nation ever travelled the deep for any length of time with honor, profit and safety without carrying with

them the means of defence ; without carrying with them arguments, more powerful, convincing, and conclusive than treaties ! Our nation has become sufficiently commercial, and sufficiently wealthy to build and support a navy for the protection of our trade. When this is effected, then and not till then, shall we be respected on the high seas ; be treated with justice, and negotiate to the best advantage with foreign nations.

Clouds of difficulty and vengeance hang over our country. War is commenced. Our frontiers are exposed. Our sea coast is almost defenceless. Our country is distracted with discord. Our public councils are bewildered. Far be it from us to add to the evils we suffer. Far be it from us to administer fuel to the fire of faction. Far be it from us to encourage opposition to the laws of the present administration. It is better to engage in any war, which may be projected, however unnecessary and inexpedient, than to involve ourselves in civil war and destroy the wise fabric of our government. We still possess the supreme power of the nation. Under Divine Providence, we hold the means of our preservation. If our rulers have not been guided by wisdom ; if their experimental systems have involved us in difficulty and danger, we still hold the means of escape. We still possess the power of electing our own rulers : and of electing them often. We possess the power of choosing men to office, who will favor our views and desires. This is our highest civil privilege. We ought to improve it without abuse. The times of our elections are near. We, as a nation, can, if we please, check the current of our present policy ; turn the channel of our national affairs ; and pursue a system, which has been proved with success. If we have lost our first love, we still have a name to live. There is still wisdom and virtue in our nation. Let new fountains of wisdom be sought out. Let them be publicly opened ; and we trust that their salubrious streams will give a new aspect to our country ; and be for the healing of the nation. But if our nation choose to persevere in the present system ; if they choose to live under the home-made restraints of trade, and see the hand of industry wither for the want of support ; if they choose to urge the contest abroad ; if our cup

must be filled; if they *will* have it so, great God, our sins deserve it all.

At this eventful, this gloomy period of our country, there is the highest necessity of a union of sentiment, a union of heart, a union of exertion in our nation. Our cause is one; our interest is one; our destiny is one. We need the union of all our wisdom. We need the union of all our strength. We ought to look to our constitution, under Divine Providence, for the salvation of our country, as we look to the gospel for the salvation of the world.

However great the evils are, which we suffer; however gloomy our prospect is, and however great our fears, we see rays of hope. We have ground of consolation and support. Our cause is with the LORD. Though jars and discords disturb our peace, and convulsions agitate the state; though civil governments rise and fall; yet the Supreme Being rules above. He moves the wheels of his government with perfect regularity, and without interruption. He overrules the governments of nations. With Him is the destiny of states and empires. He makes them instruments of his purposes. To Him we submit our cause; to Him we look for direction.

Had there been ten righteous in Sodom, the prayer of Arbaham would have prevailed. The place would have been saved. Is there not this small proportion of our nation righteous? Are there not prayers like those of faithful Abraham, offered this day before the throne of Heaven? Will not the LORD for the righteous' sake, will not the LORD for his great name's sake, deliver us from judgments, and save our nation? Have faith in God.

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